



## Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

[www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm](http://www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm)

### Tick Season Has Arrived

With the increasing amount of training that occurs during the summer months, there is an increased possibility of tick bites. But not only is there a greater risk to the soldiers in the field, but also to children and parents who will increase outdoor activities due to the nice weather. Some of these ticks may carry Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Lyme disease. With the proper precautions, both of these diseases are preventable.

Ticks are responsible for carrying several diseases. The two most important diseases are Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Lyme disease. Among some of the ticks are the deer tick, lonestar tick, and the dog tick. All of these ticks are found in grassy, shrubby, and woodland habitats in the fall and spring.

Contrary to the name "Rocky Mountain" two-thirds of recent cases have been reported in the eastern United States: North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Georgia, Tennessee, and Oklahoma. The causative agent of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever is *Rickettsia rickettsii* and in the eastern U.S. is carried by the dog tick. The incidence of infection is 8 out of 100,000 people. Symptoms of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever usually start suddenly with a persistent fever. A rash will appear 2 to 5 days after the onset of the fever located on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. Untreated, it has a 5 to 7% mortality, particularly in children and senior citizens.

Lyme disease is the most common tick borne disease in the United States. It is an illness caused by a spirochete bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. *Ixodes scapularis* (the black-legged tick) carries the bacterium in the southern region of the U.S. The illness begins a few days to a few weeks after a bite by an infected deer tick. This is an illness that includes fever and head and neck pain. In about 50% of the cases, a characteristic rash or lesion is seen. The rash generally looks like an expanding red ring. It is often described as looking like a bull's-eye with alternating light and dark rings. Individuals may also develop symptoms of fatigue, mild headache, pain and stiffness in muscles and joints, slight fever, or swollen glands. If ignored, the early symptoms may disappear, but more serious problems can develop months to years later. The later symptoms of Lyme disease can be quite severe and chronic. Muscle pain and arthritis, usually of the large joints, is common along with neurological and cardiac problems.

A tick bite is not painful. Ticks can be so small that their presence often goes unnoticed. In many cases, the tick simply bites, draws blood, and drops off. Treatment for a tick bite is careful removal of the tick from the skin and antibiotics to eliminate the infection (if necessary).

To protect yourself from ticks and tick bites, use an insect repellent containing DEET on your skin. Permethrin can be used on your clothes. DEET and Permethrin are two standard Army issue insect repellents commonly used. Most over-the-counter insect repellents, such as Off, contain DEET. The American Association of Pediatrics recommends that parents using insect repellents use products containing 6 to 10 percent DEET, and they only apply it on children over the age of two. It is recommended that standard Army issue DEET not be used because it contains more than ten percent. The best clothing protection is clothing items that have long sleeves, and it's best to tuck your pants into socks or boots. Avoid walking through brushy areas since ticks wait on branches and attach themselves to animals as they brush past. Always remember, check yourself for ticks as soon as possible after you have been in the woods.

The proper and easiest method of removing a tick is to grasp the tick with fine tweezers, as near the skin as you can, and gently pull it straight out. Be careful not to squeeze the tick when removing it which could result in more bacteria being injected. Do not try to remove the tick with your fingers or attempt to remove with lighted cigarettes, matches, nail polish, or Vaseline. The tick season is March through November.

Normally we would not prescribe medications to someone bitten by a tick, however if following a tick bite, the individual experiences any of the signs and symptoms listed in the article they should immediately seek medical attention.